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## Baccalaureate Service 'Our Heritage of Freedom' - Montana State University

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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### OUR HERITAGE OF FREEDOM

Address of Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, Baccalaureate Service  
Montana State University, Missoula, Montana  
8:00 P.M., Sunday, June 3, 1956


Twenty-three years ago I sat, by the grace and benefaction of the University faculty, where you graduates are sitting today.

I thought then, as you must think now, that one of the few burdens of this pleasant week which marks the milestone of four years of accomplishment was that I had to be subjected to the remarks of some oldster who had been selected by some process which interested me very little to give the Baccalaureate Service. It seemed clear to me then that while I was very little interested in what he had to say, I was quite aware that he had very little idea, if any at all, of what I really thought about anything.

But I remember well that I suffered him in silence and I hope only that you will do the same for me. There are some significant differences, however, between my situation then and your situation now.

For one thing, I had reached the ~~ripe old~~ age of 30 before I managed to earn my degree. Unless my judgment is failing, I suspect most of you have some years to go before you will reach that <sup>ripe old</sup> age.

For another thing, when this University conferred the degree of Bachelor of Arts on me, the United States was still in the depths of a depression and jobs were few. Today from what I <sup>know and</sup> read in the help wanted columns, most of you won't need to worry about finding jobs.



But probably the most significant difference in the situation of the college graduate today and the graduate of twenty years ago flows from the changed situation of the United States in the world. The fact that the United States in two ~~short~~ decades has moved from a position of chosen isolationism to a position of unsought world leadership has a most profound effect on every person in this nation, ~~regardless of whether he or she is being graduated.~~

In the early 1930's the United States had not recognized Russia; the high tariff policies of the 1920's were strangling our international trade; we were not a member of the League of Nations and had not even accepted the Statute of the World Court.

The events taking place in Europe, such as the rise of Hitler, seemed of small importance. The activities of the Japanese in Manchuria were not of particular concern. My classes at this University in the fields of Far Eastern and Latin American history were not characterized by over-enrollment. The Foreign Service of the United States numbered less than 700 in 1930, and the total number of employees in the Department of State was less than 5,000. Communism was a movement that didn't seem to be of particular concern to most Americans. It was not viewed as an international conspiracy threatening our freedom. Indeed, the communist candidate for President of the United States polled more than 100,000 votes in 1932 and some 80,000 votes in 1936.



I cite these facts so we may contrast them with the present. Today we not only recognize the Soviet Union in the legal, diplomatic sense, but we recognize her in the physical sense as the leading protagonist of international communism which poses the greatest threat of our time to individual man's freedom. We today recognize internal, as well as international, communism as an abiding enemy of free people.

Since 1934 our international trade barriers have been gradually liberalized under the terms of the Cordell Hull Reciprocal Trade Agreements Act. And we have not only joined the United Nations, we take pride in the leadership we took in establishing the UN and its peripheral specialized agencies in the fields of health, agriculture, aviation, education, and labor. We have joined the International Court of Justice, have accepted its jurisdiction, and have abided by its judgments.

Our lack of concern with world events in the 1930's has been replaced by household familiarity with geographic areas such as Formosa, Indonesia, Indo-China, Pakistan, and India. Our children literally call world statesmen by their first names. We accept as fact the proposition that events in far away places may be of vital concern to individual Americans. We show this concern today by a foreign service some four times as large as in 1930, by a State Department which now numbers its employees at over 10,000, and by the fact that in 1955 no less than 32,000 civilian Americans were employed overseas.

These things have a direct impact on you graduating students. The ~~position~~ <sup>status</sup> of the United States as a great power and its bastion position as defender and protagonist of freedom increases the demand for the skills you possess or will acquire.

For the foreseeable future there will be a heavy demand for men and women with foreign language ability. It daily becomes more important that more Americans than ever before learn not only the common languages of Spanish, French, Portuguese, and Italian, but the more unusual languages such as Russian, Chinese, Japanese, and the dialects and tongues of South Asia <sup>and Africa</sup>.

Combined with language ability, there is a growing need for men and women with special skills. South America, by way of example, is headed for a tremendous industrial and transportation revolution during the next decade and there will be heavy demands for help in American know-how. How many diesel engineers can General Motors send to South America who will have a working knowledge of Spanish? How many television technicians know Portuguese? How many of Montana's mining engineers understand why some Latin American states have nationalized their mineral resources?

Doctors, lawyers, <sup>teachers,</sup> psychologists, nutritionists, agronomists, mining engineers, -- there is scarcely a skill or profession for which there is not an international demand waiting to be satisfied. To the extent that worldwide needs for knowledge can be met by qualified Americans, we can expect to influence peoples. And I might add -- to the extent the United States does not stand ready to help millions of people in neutralist states,



there will be indoctrinated communists ready to help them move toward a totalitarian life.

Now I know there are among you some who may ask why we should concern ourselves with the needs of other peoples. Why should I talk of trying to influence foreigners?

The main reason for our concern results from the fact that any diminution in the area of individual freedom, whether it results from fascism, communism, other forms of totalitarianism, or from the failure of dependent peoples to grow toward independence, threatens freedom in the United States. Undoubtedly, there are still among us some who view our relations with other nations as activities we could better do without, or in any event, matters about which only experts should be concerned. Too many of us, however, have seen wars that have taken a heavy toll of American lives, and that have disrupted our peaceful growth at home, to be indifferent to this interrelationship. We know that we cannot banish the problems of international relations by closing our eyes to them. We know we cannot -- by voting republican or democrat -- vote our international problems out of existence.

One observer put the matter clearly and trenchantly recently when he remarked, and I quote, "Every value that you and I cherish as free people, the things for which men have died on the battlefields of the world, all of the things that are woven together in the rich heritage that we call America, all of those values are in jeopardy because they cannot be preserved

in a little vacuum called America. They must be preserved in the world in which powerful forces are at work threatening these basic values that we believe in . . . "

The freedom we know will either expand and live, or be curtailed and die. Freedom is not a static thing which can be preserved in America and allowed to die elsewhere. What happens to the aspirations for liberty of the student in Indonesia will eventually effect the freedom of the men and women who walk the campus here in Missoula. I believe this thought was best expressed in a different time and a different age and in a smaller world. It was true then but it is much more true now. Let me read to you the famous words of John Donne, the 17th Century poet and minister. They are taken from one of his sermons:

"No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod be washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

~~((John Donne - (1573-1631) - Devotions XVII))~~

There are among us, of course, a few who search for a quick way to preserve freedom. They hope for the immediate creation of world government, for example, or to attain complete and universal disarmament overnight.

I do not belittle the great efforts and devoted dedication of people who urge such projects as these -- even though they may well be visionary. The point I make is that there is no quick <sup>no cheap/no</sup> and easy way to attain a Utopia in which men and nations may live in peace and freedom.

A few days ago I read a newspaper dispatch from Denver which discussed a fad that is sweeping some parts of the country. It seems that there are drug stores which sell what is known as a "happy pill." These pills are advertised as being able to restore peace of mind. But the Colorado State Medical Society has cautioned that none of these drugs is curative of anything. They are only palliatives.

I want to emphasize that there is no "happy pill" that this nation can take which will get rid of our international ailments -- that will guarantee peace. We may as well realize that the one certain prediction that we can make for the future of our international relations is that we are in for a prolonged period of difficulty and there is no palliative for that condition.

In contrast to those who seek the "happy pill" treatment for international tension, there are those who believe that the way to relieve international tension is to encourage it to erupt into violence. Some even suggest preventive war. Fortunately, the number of advocates of this course is small and since the development of hydrogen or thermo-nuclear weapons it has become even smaller.



The difference, then between the world you graduates face and the world my generation encountered twenty years ago is that the United States is now a part of the world. We could not isolate ourselves if we wanted to.

Yet as a part of the world -- and probably the most important part -- we cannot single-handedly mould the world to our own image. But we can influence the direction in which the world moves by the quality of our character as a government, and as a people.

It is important that we do our level best to influence the direction the world moves because we are at the cross-roads of a fundamental conflict. Superficially we often think of this conflict as one which involves the United States on one side, and the Soviet Union on the other. But the issue is more crucial. It stems from the basic antithesis between freedom and totalitarianism. Relations between the Soviet Union and the United States are only the surface evidence of the basic conflict. The basic question underlying this conflict is whether the state exists to serve the individual, or the individual exists to serve the state. If on the one hand the individual is to find his aspirations for spiritual, political, and economic growth always hemmed in by the demands of an omnipotent state, individual freedom will constantly be curtailed and eventually it will die. If on the other hand, the state exists to provide a framework within which the individual may grow, we may expect the gradual expansion of the area of man's freedom.

The origin of the cleavage is not new although it has been a long time in becoming apparent. Over a hundred years ago Alexis de Tocqueville foresaw the conflict and made a remarkable prediction. In his words: "To achieve its objective, America relies on personal interest, and gives full reign to the strength and reason of the individual. Russia centers all authority of society in a single man. The principal instrument of the former is freedom, of the latter slavery. Their points of departure are different, they follow different paths. Nonetheless, each of them seems intended through some secret design of Providence to hold in its hands the destinies of half the world."

Here then are the two fundamental alternatives which face mankind. Although the United States may be able to accommodate itself to such international tensions as grow out of boundary disputes or trade disagreements without a significant curtailment of individual freedom in the United States, it is by no means certain that a further expansion of totalitarian communism would not have a direct and immediate impact on the future of freedom in this country. <sup>As</sup> I suggested earlier, freedom cannot be preserved in a vacuum.

This is not to say that the ideological clash must lead ultimately to war. But it does seem clear to me that this conflict holds a greater threat to the peace and security of the United States than any other foreign policy issue which we face. Indeed, the most profound foreign policy issues of our time revolve around the ideological clash of communism and freedom. Just as the destiny of this nation during the past century was determined by our

management of our domestic resources, our destiny in this century will be determined by the way we manage our external relations.

Ultimately, it seems to me, there are only three possible outcomes to this struggle between freedom and communism. First, there could be military conflict which would relieve the present tension by the drastic treatment of destroying life as we know it.

Second, there may eventually be a stalemate in which the conflicting systems may live in fear and in the sullen acceptance of each other's presence on the earth. This would be a solution in the pattern of the great religious conflicts of the middle ages. I personally doubt, however, that the conflict between communism and freedom will end in a stalemate of that kind.

The third alternative seems to me to be the most likely. There may in time be world evolution which will result ultimately in survival of the system that is most fit to the temper of mankind.

In suggesting this possible outcome to the struggle you may think me guilty of begging the question, and I am afraid that is the case. I do not know at this point whether in the long run man will choose to move more in the direction of totalitarianism or freedom. It is my personal belief that the future of mankind lies in freedom. But you ladies and gentlemen know as well as I how perverse a creature man sometimes is. Although we have made our choice in this country, there are still great uncommitted areas of the world where men have little awareness of the fundamentals of freedom. For them there can as yet be no clear choice based on adequate understanding of the alternatives.



We are now, of course, co-existing with Soviet communism. But neither communism nor democracy are static concepts. One or the other will ultimately prevail not necessarily by force of arms, but more likely, in my opinion, by force of spirit.

This is the first graduating class to which I could ever state my belief that a world war in your lifetime may be avoided. I make this statement not because of things that have been done by Democrats or Republicans, or because nations have learned to handle their international relations on a rational basis. I make this statement because of things that have been done by educated men. The men of science from many nations have, in their pursuit of knowledge, uncovered the means by which man may light the fires of atomic destruction. This capacity which at one time was a threat may now have become a benefit in disguise because any nation which might start a world conflagration may now reasonably expect to bring about its own destruction.

The realization of the world's great powers during the past year that another war would be likely to destroy all life has imposed the "peace of mutual terror" of which Sir Winston Churchill has spoken.

The Geneva Conference, called at the suggestion of Senator Walter George, the distinguished chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, may have had its failures, but it did, in my opinion, crystallize the unspoken and unwritten understanding of the United States and the Soviet Union that neither of them can start a war, or permit a situation between other powers to deteriorate to the point where a great war threatens.

The significance of this situation, if my judgment be correct, is not that we should abandon our readiness to meet force with force should that prove necessary. The important point is that the conflict between totalitarianism and freedom will be decided by force of spirit rather than by force of arms.

This, I suggest, is a hopeful situation because it is in this realm of spirit where I believe the United States has before it the greatest opportunity to lead. Our greatest opportunities to advance the concept of human liberty in the next decade are to be found in the moral, political and economic ~~realm~~ <sup>fields</sup> and not in the military realm.

The future of human liberty as a concept for man to live by is being decided in two areas of the world. It is being decided in the United States where action will speak louder than words. It is being decided in those areas of the world in the vicinity of the equator which have newly achieved their national independence or are now in the process of achieving it.

It would require another speech for me to consider the ways in which our conduct within the United States influences our relations with the rest of the world. I suggest, however, that what we do at home is far more important than what we say. The influence of this nation on the world is determined by what we are in fact, not by what we think or say we are.

The future of individual freedom is also being decided in that part of the newly independent world which stretches more than half way around the ~~world~~ <sup>globe</sup> from Indonesia to Morocco. This area of the earth has for generations known Western civilization not so much as a clarion of liberty but as a source

of exploitations. The Western economic system which was known to the peoples of Asia was not the private enterprise we know in the United States characterized by respect for the rights of labor and a sense of responsibility to the community. Rather, Asia knew a capitalism of Charles Dickens' England which, as a Justice of the Supreme Court has remarked, ran on a sweat shop basis, exploiting labor. It knew a capitalism that took great dividends out of a nation and in which a 25 percent return a year on capital was not uncommon.

The United States has been extremely active in the newly independent, underdeveloped areas of the world in recent years in attempting to show these areas that capitalism does not mean exploitation. We have spent more effort in these nations than all the rest of the free world and the communist world put together. But I am not sure, despite our prodigious efforts, that all we have been doing is good. We must not make the mistake of believing that because an operation is big, it is good. We have, I believe, placed undue stress on building defensive military umbrellas, oftentimes overlooking the concerns of the indigenous peoples who are immersed in problems of day-to-day survival. We have tended to give our economic assistance with principal emphasis on the idea that the recipient nations had to align themselves in virtually every way with our own policies. Why help these nations move toward a better life unless they are willing to "stand up and be counted" has often been the contention.



The total impact of this kind of approach is that despite our bounty, we appear to many Asians as having a foreign policy focused on fear and arrogance. Any man who is fearful or arrogant is on the defensive, whether he knows it or not. Neither posture is fitting for a creative America.

Much of the world is not concerned with whether the United States opposes communism. We may as well realize that fact. Exhortations to others to share our opposition to communism have more often than not fallen on deaf ears. These people are not so much interested in what we are against, as in what we are for. They are not as much concerned with how much money we will put into a program designed primarily to assuage our own concern, as they are in sharing a partnership relationship with them as they struggle to improve the general lot of their lives.

What we should seek to create in our relations with the underdeveloped areas of the world is independence, not dependence. If we operate on the concept that the independent nations must either be with us or against us, we will in fact be creating satellites, not independent states, and a satellite has no strength of its own. If we condition assistance to these areas on the basis that they must be with us in opposition to something, we are in effect trying to buy mercenaries. Any state that can be bought is, in my opinion, not worth buying.

As long as we operate a foreign aid program based on such a theory we are buying trouble. We will be buying tension as between ourselves and the states who hope for partnership instead of submission.

Our dealings with these new nations call for calm and caution on our part. We are not going to understand them and they will certainly not understand

us if we view their future with pessimism and let our dealings with them be guided by passion.

I have suggested that there are two areas in which the future of man's freedom is being decided -- in the United States by what we are, and in the uncommitted, underdeveloped areas of the world. The United States as a nation and as a people exercises a tremendous influence in this battle for free men because the fundamentals of our Christian religion and our democratic form of government have always emphasized the importance of the individual.

Our religious attitude toward the individual is expressed by Christ's remark that not one sparrow should fall to the ground but that your Father would know. The Christian religion constantly emphasizes the importance of the individual.

Our form of government as well as our religion is also based on the ultimate importance of the individual. The Declaration of Independence states the "self-evident" truth that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed."

In other words, government and religion in the United States have promoted the growth of the individual in freedom and in spirit.

One of our great contemporary authors has written: "Nothing was ever created by two men. There are no good collaborations, whether in music,

in art, in poetry, in mathematics, in philosophy. Once the miracle of creation has taken place, the group can build and extend it, but the group never invents anything. The preciousness lies in the lonely mind of man." But individual freedom is in danger from the attack of totalitarianism. The writer continues: "And now the forces marshaled around the concept of the group have declared a war of extermination on that preciousness, the mind of man. By disparagement, by starvation, by repressions, forced direction, and the stunning hammerblows of conditioning, the free roving mind is being pursued, roped, blunted, drugged. . . "

The preciousness of our religion and our government lies in their ability to preserve and to promote the capability of every individual to make his unique contribution to the progress of mankind.

None of us can know the contribution he may make toward man's progress. Some may develop new ideas; others will improve on our physical surroundings; some will influence the lives of their companions; others will pass their heritage on to children capable of greater contributions than their parents. We each have the capacity to leave the world a better place than it was before us.

You may have heard the story of the rich and favored King who asked a wise Athenian whether he considered the King lucky. The answer was quick. "How can I tell. You aren't dead yet."

And this is, I suppose, a characteristic of the contributions we may make. Their total impact may not be known until we have passed on.



Man as an individual has laboriously struggled upward. He understands things today he did not understand last year or the year before. He has moved ahead step by step. He can continue this progress when his spirit and mind can operate in freedom. His growth will be stunted if his freedom is impaired.

It is for this reason that it is so important that we as individuals and as a nation shape our destiny toward protecting and promoting freedom within and without this nation.

You young men and women gathered here today to take an important step in life are the product of <sup>a</sup> ~~free men and women~~ <sup>people</sup>. You are here to carry on the heritage man has built. You are each fitting yourselves to make your unique contributions to man's progress so that he may live and grow in peace and freedom.